

# The Sad Comedy of the Borrowed Fluffy-Ruffles

How the Beautiful "Alimony Widow" of Millionaire Gordon Thorne Led a Chase to Canada After Her Most

"This Is Too Much!"

Intimate Treasures



These Three Photographic Studies of Mrs. Virginia Milner Thorne Explain Why She Was Called "Chicago's Loveliest Girl." Artists Say Few Beauties Can Stand the Test of Profile, Full-Face and Three-Quarters-Face Photography. But Mrs. Thorne Does.



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**WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM**

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K TORONTO ONT 45CP APRIL 6 1922

VIRGINIA THORNE 173

20 WEST 69 ST NEWYORK NY

HAVE BEEN INTERVIEWED BY REPORTERS WHO REQUEST STORY IN REFERENCE TO YOUR ALIMONY AND CONDUCT SINCE DIVORCE BUT HAVE REMAINED SILENT I AM DOING THIS ON ASSUMPTION YOU ARE DOING LIKEWISE YOU ARE AWARE OF WHAT I ABSOLUTELY KNOW ABOUT YOUR AFFAIRS BUT NEITHER OF US ARE AFTER UNPLEASANT NOTORIETY HAVE GIVEN INSURANCE COMPANY SECURITIES FOR THEIR INTEREST IN AFFAIR AM MAILING YOU ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS NOTHING REMAINS TO BE DONE UNLESS YOU MAKE IT UNPLEASANT FOR ME IN WHICH EVENT YOU WILL HAVE YOURSELF TO BLAME RESULTS

GERALDINE CALDWELL

Photographic Copy of a Telegram Mrs. Thorne Received from Geraldine Caldwell.

PRETTY and petite Mrs. Virginia Milner Thorne, divorced wife of the millionaire Chicago clubman, Gordon C. Thorne, clicked her latchkey in the lock of her dainty apartment at No. 20 West Sixty-ninth street, New York. She was tired after her long day's ride from Chicago. She was glad to be home again—back to the cozy suite where she has lived comfortably but quietly since she received her freedom and \$750 a month alimony in a court decree a year ago.

"Gerry!" called Mrs. Thorne, switching on the electric. There was no answer. She had left her apartment in possession of a girl friend, Geraldine Caldwell, who was temporarily "down on her luck," pending the fulfillment of stage ambitions. Mrs. Thorne had hospitably taken her in.

"I guess Gerry's out," remarked Mrs. Thorne to her maid. "As soon as you unpack, Marie, fix a bath. I'm simply perishing!" And get out some fresh lingerie, please."

Mrs. Thorne entered her boudoir—and stopped. Her jewel box, which she generally kept in the drawer of the dressing table, was lying open on its top. Three of her rings were gone. So was her black onyx plaque with the Russian wolfhound studded in diamonds and the bow-knot jeweled pin she particularly prized for its memories. Mrs. Thorne, momentarily resentful, laughed. Gerry, she thought, had indeed "made herself at home."

She walked to the closet, unhooking her cape. The accustomed row of cloaks and gowns seemed depleted. Yes, at least one frock was missing and her beautiful wrap of black canton crepe. Still Mrs. Thorne preserved her good humor.

Marie, the maid, was standing before the chiffonier, pulling out drawer after drawer. Suddenly she swung about to Mrs. Thorne with a single expressive French gesture.

"Madame, your lingerie is gone!"

Amazement was Mrs. Thorne's first emotion. She couldn't believe it. Why, she'd left stacks and stacks of chiffon and crepe de chine snuggled into their proper receptacle!

It was too much! Jewelry—she didn't mind. Her black wrap—all right. Even a frock or two she could forgive. But to borrow under any circumstances, let alone to grab without any "by-your-leave" at all, the soft and silken pretties, frouny with lace and ribbons, which every woman cherishes as she does beauty itself—that was beyond endurance!

Mrs. Thorne summoned the superintendent of the apartment, Milton Whitley. He said he helped Mrs. Caldwell pack two bags just the day before—that Mrs. Caldwell called him to the apartment and had him hand down the suit cases from a shelf. He said he watched her opening the bureau, chiffonier, desk and closets, piling her selections on the bed.

Whitley stated in the affidavit he later made for Mrs. Thorne: "Said Geraldine Caldwell directed him to pack those things into bags, and deponent, thinking it unusual, remarked to said Geraldine Caldwell, 'That's Mrs. Thorne's' and she replied, 'Pack!' Deponent states that he did as he was told, closed the bags and subsequently deposited them, at her request, in a taxicab."

Right on top of her interview with the superintendent Mrs. Thorne got a telephone call. It was from Miss Alice King, an old Chicago friend, manager of the Curtis-Bell Studios, smart Fifth avenue photographers, and what Miss King had to tell Mrs. Thorne was an earful.

"That Mrs. Caldwell was in here the other day. She had her picture taken. And what do you think, Virginia? She was wearing your rings and your onyx plaque and your monkey fur cape and heaven knows what else that belongs to you!"

Mrs. Thorne's last hope that "Gerry" had merely gone out for a stroll and would return shortly had been dispelled by the superintendent's story of the bags and the taxicab. Burning with the thought of her "borrowed" lingerie, she telephoned the Travelers' Insurance Company. To a representative of the company, who called an hour later,

she said: "I have had nothing about you yet, also have witnesses to this effect, but unless you stop talking and have others stop until you receive better I am writing I shall not be responsible for anything that happens."

Another said in part: "Have been interviewed by reporters, who request story in reference to your alimony and conduct since divorce, but have remained silent. I am doing this on assumption you are doing likewise. You are aware of what I absolutely know about your affairs, but neither of us are after unpleasant notoriety."

Presumably Mrs. Caldwell refers to what happened at Mrs. Thorne's divorce trial, when Judge Henry Lewis, after granting her \$750 a month alimony, said: "You must remember that if you do anything wrong or your conduct is not that of a good woman at any time, he can come in here and have this order set aside so as to reduce this alimony."

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"Who is this girl? How long have you known her?"

Mrs. Thorne hesitated. She had met Mrs. Caldwell last year in Chicago. They had a number of mutual friends among the young married set. Then, when they met again at a tea in New York recently, she had sympathized with Mrs. Caldwell's efforts to return to the stage. It was only a short step to inviting her home for a few days. That was

all—except—oh, yes! Mrs. Caldwell had said she was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, and she had an aunt in Toronto.

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Mrs. Thorne wired Canada. Three telegrams got no answer. Then came a long distance call. Mrs. Caldwell didn't understand what her friend meant by such sharp telegrams. What if she had borrowed a suit case and one or two unimportant things? Lingerie? How absurd!

"Go up there and get your stuff," advised the representative of the insurance company. Mrs. Thorne went. She was accompanied by Miss King. They had affidavits—Miss King's own and the superintendent's. In Toronto they got a search warrant. Two detectives, the Toronto agent of the insurance company and an adjutant went with Mrs. Thorne and her friend to the home of Mrs. Caldwell's aunt.

There this sad little comedy had its climax. Threats and pleadings, tears and reproaches! "You gave them to me!" from Gerry. "I did not!" from Mrs. Thorne. "Oh, Virginia, you've ruined my chances to get a millionaire husband!" "Well, I only hope you haven't ruined my lingerie!"

The detectives insisted on taking Mrs. Caldwell to the police station, but Mrs. Thorne refused to bring formal charges. So far as Mrs. Thorne is concerned the incident is closed, but from her former friend she has received three telegrams. One read:

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